



State of Connecticut

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES STATE CAPITOL

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*Testimony by Representative Jason Perillo
Before the Public Safety and Security Committee
On House Bill 5381
March 6, 2012*

Chairmen Hartley and Dargan, Ranking Members Guglielmo and Geigler, thank you for the opportunity to testify in favor of HB 5381, AN ACT CONCERNING THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PUBLIC SAFETY ANSWERING POINT CONSOLIDATION FEASIBILITY STUDY.

A Consolidation Feasibility Study Report was commissioned by OSET and conducted by communications technology consulting firm L.R. Kimball. That report was issued in January of 2012. The report concluded that the consolidation of PSAPs would be more efficient and, more importantly, more effective than the emergency dispatching system currently experienced in the State of Connecticut.

Among other things, the report found that:

- The majority of Connecticut PSAPs handle fewer than 8,000 calls per year with many handling under four calls per hour. Municipalities would benefit financially and patients would benefit from enhanced performance.
- The level of service is fragmented in many areas. This requires the transfer of 911 calls from one PSAP to another, thus delaying the dispatch of emergency responders to patients.
- The level of service to the public varies from PSAP to PSAP with emergency medical dispatching, or EMD, provided inconsistently or not at all.

In generating the report, interviews were held with professionals throughout the public safety field. Based upon those interviews, the report concluded that there is a desire to achieve the financial and operational efficiencies that are possible through a larger service area, but only if local control and decision making is retained and strengthened. Organizational models that strike this balance have been developed successfully in many parts of the country. We can do so here in Connecticut, as well.

This is not a new issue to come before this committee. Many constituencies have stated in the past that this cannot be done and have presented myriad reasons why. The report prepared for OSET addresses those concerns and states clearly that they can be overcome.

Right now, patients are receiving a sub-optimal level of service at a higher-than-necessary cost to taxpayers. To simply say "we can't or we won't" is no longer an acceptable answer.

I do not pretend to know the best way to move toward a more efficient and effective dispatching system. However, the OSET report makes a number of recommendations as to how consolidation could occur as well as how it could be funded. I urge the Public Safety Committee, representatives of OSET, and leaders from the public safety community to develop a measured, phased-in approach to reasonable consolidation of our state's public safety answering points. OSET should be given the legislative directive to move forward in cooperation with key stakeholders to develop the solutions identified in its report.

I thank the members of the committee for their time and for their consideration of this very important matter.

Sincerely,

Jason Perillo
State Representative
113th District